

INTERPOL: THE WORLD'S POLICE FORCE

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Introduction

In 1914 the first ever international police congress was held in Monaco, this conference made the needs for a centralized system of policing relevant to the parties in attendance. The conference also led to the establishment of the International Criminal Police Commission in 1923, which is what many consider the early form of the International Criminal Police Organization (SUN 2017). During the next three decades many changes took place and as result of World War 2, the organization collapsed in the early 1940's leading to the official creation of Interpol. By 1956, Interpol received official United Nations recognition as an autonomous non-governmental organization (NGO). In 1996, Interpol gained United Nations observer status making it an official international organization (Cruz 2016).

Today, through decades of crime fighting, Interpol has become the world's largest criminal policing organization with 192 member states and National Central Bureaus (NCB's) present in each one. Working with the mission of preventing and fighting crime through enhanced innovation and cooperation in matters concerning security and policing Interpol's importance to global cooperation cannot be overlooked (Interpol Strategic Framework 2017).

Interpol: What they do and why they do it.

Interpol's main objective in today's world is facilitating connections between member states by bridging the gap between international and domestic policing and helping local police departments improve their abilities through capacity building measures. The work of Interpol is more important today than ever and facing more problems than ever because of one main factor, globalization (Cruz 2016). Globalization does not discriminate, especially when it comes to crime. Everyday crime is becoming more and more internationalized and policing must follow the same suite if crimes are going to be controlled. But how can a local police department conduct international operations? This is where Interpol comes in. Interpol has hundreds to thousands of database connections and training programs, some of which are only accessible to members, that allows small local police organizations to carry on their work across borders. Interpol does not perform field work independently in member states as their only goal is assisting police in member states with fighting crime. Due to the importance of Interpol in fighting crime many of the member states Interpol assists do not actually have diplomatic relations but work together for the sake of making the world safer. This makes Interpol a rare case of an international organization that has the ability to defy diplomatic conflict (Bigot 2015). Due to Interpol's broad reach and difficult set of goals, the organization faces a plethora of internal issues that it must address to continue to be effective. Interpol addresses these issues through an updated

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strategic framework and a capacity building and training strategy, both expected to run through 2020.

2017-2020 Strategic Framework

Interpol works under a detailed strategic framework designed to further enhance police cooperation across borders and enhance innovation in crime fighting and security operations. This framework was implemented in 2017 and is expected to be utilized until 2020, it has been specifically designed with increasing globalization in mind. Interpol's strategic framework focuses on providing an information hub for law enforcement worldwide, delivering state of the art capabilities to support members, leading innovative approaches to global policing, maximizing Interpol's role in global security, and the consolidation of resources and governance in order to enhance overall operations (Interpol Strategic Framework 2017). A major objective of this strategic framework is for Interpol to address many issues that hold it back from its potential, allowing the organization to continue to be the world's leader in police training. In the past, Interpol's database systems have not been as helpful as possible because there has been both not enough, and too much information at the same time. For instance, Interpol may have so much information on a particular gang the database cannot effectively organize it, while on the other hand they may be faced with an issue like human trafficking but not enough information is present to be of assistance (Bigot 2015). Data bases are central to Interpol's support of law enforcement and therefore, must work efficiently for Interpol to work efficiently. To address these issues, Interpol has made diversification and organization of its database a top priority; they have also decided to step up their research.

The 2017-2020 strategic framework calls for an increased hiring of researchers and analysts. Interpol hopes that placing a larger emphasis on research will allow it to be more innovative and specialized with its projects. Specialized projects are something Interpol has not done exceedingly well at in the past because of their diverse membership but it is expected that an increased focus on research and database improvements will make it easier for Interpol to create effective specialized projects. An example of a specialized project resulting from the new framework is a training program that addresses security at major international sporting events. This program was designed specifically for Qatar, to help the country secure the upcoming Olympics but it will soon be available to any police agency upon request. The program offers a complete course and even provides participants with a certification upon completion (Crumpton 2018). Without an increased focus on specialization and research Interpol would have never been able to make this one of a kind project happen.

The framework also places a focus on improving Interpol's internal structure. Although no specifics have been identified, Interpol has planned

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governance reforms to better reflect the diversity of their 192 members and to make funding less of a barrier. Finances have become a major internal issues within Interpol; Due to the fact that much of Interpol's funding comes from member contributions its focus can be constrained by its highest contributors or the nationality of its employees (Bigot 2015). Interpol has before wrongly prioritized issues based off the instructions of their highest donors, but hopefully these internal governance reforms will make operations a more equal playing field regardless of contributions.

Interpol: 2017-2020 Capacity Building and Training Strategy (CBT)

Globalization and the increasing prominence of transnational crime have forced Interpol to develop a new strategy for its capacity building and training programs so member states can start to deal with their own issues effectively (Cruz 2016). Training and capacity building is a major part of Interpol's role as an organization, therefore, this newly revitalized strategy is important to the future effectiveness of Interpol. The strategy is centered around three streams of action, all of which have their own complementary objectives.

The first stream of action is to optimize the effectiveness of training courses and activities. Due to Interpol's diverse membership base and the large amount of functions it performs effectiveness of their training courses and activities have been brought under question, this new strategy is Interpol's way of answering those questions. The first objective regarding the first stream of action is the implementation of a process innovation model. The purpose of this model is to centralize internal training procedures and decentralize training delivery. This allows agents of Interpol to stay on the same page and improve their own skills, while also improving the effectiveness of training through a delivery system that has a broader, more specific reach. This will effectively solve obtainability issues that many member states face. The second objective is the establishment of a needs assessment system. Traditionally, Interpol assessed the needs of member based on their regions like North America, or MENA; this is much too broad and the new system will help Interpol better understand the specific individual needs of its member states by narrowing their needs assessments to focus on smaller regions, towns, or villages. Innovating training methods is another objective for this stream of action. Over the years training has not been need-based creating major performance gaps and subpar utilization of technological resources. Innovations of training will now go hand in hand with the new needs assessment system to better address these gaps in performance and technological use. Due to some training programs of the past being irrelevant to the member states, creating an accreditation program for all training programs is the fourth objective related to the first stream of action. This new accreditation program focusing on police best practices, makes it mandatory for the General Secretariat of Interpol to accredit all training initiatives. This adds to Interpol's checks and balances,

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an important part of any organization (Capacity Building and Training Strategy 2017).

The second stream of action included in Interpol's capacity building and training strategy is enhancing the impact and reach of Interpol policing capabilities. National Central Bureaus (NCB's) are located in all 192 member states, they link Interpol with local police, and are the lifeline of Interpol's operations (Structure and Governance 2018). For these reasons, a major objective of the second stream of action is to heavily expand the capabilities of these Bureaus. Interpol plans to do this through 24/7 assistance and a new set of mandatory standards and trainings that their agents must meet. The reforms are expected to improve the working capacity of NCB's, therefore, improving the capacity of member police departments. The second objective regarding the second stream of action is expanding Interpol's training audience. Typically, Interpol has not done well at training everyone involved in local policing, like rookie officers and the dispatch team, which is counterproductive to their mission. Now Interpol places a major focus on creating training courses and programs that build the capacities of everyone from dispatch operators to police recruits and high ranking officers (Capacity Building and Training Strategy 2017).

The third stream of action is improving organizational capacities for training. Interpol had a 2017 budget of \$144 million (USD), this sounds like a large chunk of change but when you're responsible for assistance in policing close to 8 billion people it doesn't go very far (Funding 2018). Due to this limited budget Interpol is looking into new budgeting strategies to stretch their dollars further. Focusing on increasing organizational capabilities with a limited budget, Interpol does its best to create programs that are quick, efficient, and can be sustainably maintained by members. The first objective to obtain this goal is enhancing distance learning capabilities. When referring to Interpol capacity building "distance learning" is the ability for Interpol members to utilize training programs and other Interpol capacity building measures without any Interpol agents actually present. This is important because Interpol has 192 members and a limited budget, so it is near impossible for agents to be everywhere they are needed at one time. Luckily, the recent increases in technology have made it easy for Interpol to build their distance learning capacities, the Interpol Global Learning Center (IGLC) is a great example of this. IGLC provides live interfaces where members can speak to Interpol agents via live video chat 24/7, IGLC also provides video resources in every language imaginable. IGLC has a component, comparable to a form of YouTube, that deals only with crime fighting and translates into hundreds of languages. This allows Interpol maximum effectiveness because they are now able to offer their services to members at any time no matter the location. Centralizing training data is the second object for the third stream of action. Due to the transnational nature of Interpol, centralization of data has always been important to the organization but the immense amounts of data it is in

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charge of organizing have caused many data centralization issues. As a result of recent attempts to improve data organization, Interpol is searching for new supercomputer programs that allow for improved creativity when organizing training information. Once Interpol finds an effective program to integrate into their database, training programs can be more specific and less commonly duplicated, making capacity building measures more effective. Interpol is the world's largest law enforcement agency so they have always been a major leader regarding policies, procedures, and training methods but recently Interpol has realized there is much more to law enforcement than what they've discovered. Because of this, the last objective regarding the third stream of action is leveraging partnerships. Interpol is putting a new focus on working with other international organizations, specifically law enforcement agencies, to discover new methods and policies that may work better (Capacity Building and Training Strategy 2017). A good example of this is an increased dialogue with many U.S. agencies like the FBI and other local departments (Cruz 2016).

The 2017-2020 capacity building and training strategy being implemented by Interpol, in my opinion, is the most extensive law enforcement strategy ever created. Although the effects of this strategy have not yet been weighed I believe it will have a significant impact on transnational crime and remedy the many issues Interpol faces internally. The strategies strength is derived from the three streams of actions and the secondary objectives that lie within, making it extensive and all-encompassing lining up directly with the all-encompassing goal of Interpol to help make this world a safer place through building the abilities of local police.

Conclusion

Interpol faces more challenges than it ever has. Globalization is at historical highs and Interpol member states are becoming more and more uncooperative, but the organization has been properly addressing these challenges through its strategic framework as well and its capacity building and training strategy, expected to run through 2020. These new frameworks and strategies address all major problems facing Interpol, and if carried out well, Interpol will continue to be the world leader in policing. The 2017-2020 strategic framework and capacity building strategy will also allow Interpol to effectively address internal problems of the future that it is likely encounter as the world's police force.

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